

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-6 are amended, and new claims 7-10 are added. Support for the amendment to independent claims 1 and 2 can be found, for example, in the specification at paragraph [0049]. Support for new claims 7-10 can be found, for example, in the specification at paragraphs [0013] and [0014] and original claims 4 and 5. Claims 1-6 are amended for form. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. §112 Rejection of Claims 2-6

Claims 2-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for antecedent basis. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, claim 2 is amended to recite "the second temporarily storing means" to refer to one of the adjacent temporarily storing means. Claim 3 is amended to recited "the outlets and the inlets," as suggested by the Office Action. Claim 3 is further amended to replace "the temporary storing means" with "the second temporary storing means" to refer to one of the adjacent temporarily storing means. Claim 4 is amended to recite "the outlet of the one temporary storing means."

Thus, claims 2-6 have been amended to satisfy all the requirements under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 1-3 over Durofil

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,450,154 to Durofil et al. ("Durofil"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Durofil does not teach or suggest every feature of independent claims 1-3. Durofil does not teach or suggest "allowing the same linear body to sequentially pass through all the temporarily storing means repeatedly while forming the festoon," as recited in amended

independent claim 1 (emphasis added). Further, Durofil does not teach or suggest "wherein the same linear body is allowed to sequentially pass through all the temporarily storing means repeatedly while forming the festoon," as recited in independent claim 2 (emphasis added).

Durofil is directed to a storage buffer being built-in in between machines for processing continuous strip photographic material (see Durofil, col. 1, lines 7-10). Durofil is aimed at providing merely a compact buffer between two processing machines (see Durofil, col. 5, lines 25-30). Durofil discloses that the storage buffer includes two rows of rollers and each roll comprises a set of upper rollers and a corresponding set of lower rollers (see Durofil, col. 5, lines 35-43). In Durofil, continuous strip photographic material enters the buffer from one machine and leaves the buffer entering the other machine without passing through the buffer again (see Durofil, Fig. 1). Further, Durofil discloses that rollers can be brought close to each other "up to the minimum allowable distance required to prevent them from touching each other (emphasis added) (see Durofil, col. 5, lines 19-21)." Therefore, continuous strip photographic material can only pass through the storage buffer once.

Thus, for at least these reasons, independent claims 1 and 2 are patentable over Durofil. Claim 3 depend from claim 2. Thus, claim 3 is patentable over Durofil for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, as well as for additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

B. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 4 and 6 over Durofil in view of Seaborn

Claims 4 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Durofil in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,407,767 to Seaborn ("Seaborn"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Durofil and Seaborn, alone or in a permissible combination, do not teach or suggest every feature of claims 4 and 6. As discussed above, Durofil does not disclose "wherein the same linear body is allowed to sequentially pass through all the temporarily storing means repeatedly while forming the festoon," as recited in independent claim 2. Seaborn does not

remedy the deficiency discussed above with respect to Durofil. Seaborn is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of "an abnormal tensile force detecting means." Claims 4 and 6 depend from independent claim 2. Thus, claims 4 and 6 are patentable over Durofil and Seaborn for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, as well as for additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

C. §103(a) Rejection of Claim 5 over Durofil and Seaborn in view of Henk

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Durofil in view of Seaborn and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,532,500 to Henk ("Henk"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Durofil, Seaborn and Henk, alone or in a permissible combination, do not teach or suggest every feature of claim 5. As discussed above, Durofil and Seaborn do not teach or suggest every feature of claim 2. Henk does not remedy the deficiency discussed above with respect to Durofil and Seaborn. Henk is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of "detection roller." Claim 5 depends from claim 2. Thus, claim 5 is patentable over Durofil, Seaborn and Henk for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, as well as for additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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